TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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Life Ministry to Town and Country Churches

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

• The Life Ministry plan is an invention of the New Hampshire Congregational Christian Conference to serve rural churches in difficult areas. A "life minister" makes an agreement with the state conference to devote his professional life to going where the conference assigns and the State Conference assures his support. The first life ministry was established in 1944. In 1951 there were three ordained men serving as life ministers in New Hampshire.

It is characteristic of rural communities that difficulties arise where population depletion occurs or where leadership has resulted in the weakening and disorganization of churches. These same areas may be recognized as in need of religious services because of the lack of any active church. At the same time they have no great appeal to ministers who feel that their professional advancement depends on professional success. Life Ministry is a plan which recognizes that small places require capable leadership.

Regional Handicaps

It is also characteristic that a number of adjacent neighborhoods and parishes may suffer decline due to the fact that they share regional handicaps. Churches in such areas can be served by a ministry which reaches all of them. With the modern highway system and automobile, it is possible for a minister to preach in several churches each Sunday and he can render pastoral services throughout the week in a half-dozen adjacent communities. These adjacent churches may each be submarginal when they stand alone but together they may become a parish of promise, each church contributing its share of the service and support of the combined parish organization and of the minister.

In New Hampshire, Life Ministry was established on the basis of one church which had lost its building in a fire. In the first four years a new building was erected and the community enlisted in the parish.

Practical Arrangements

In general, the life minister serves more than one church, including as many as half a dozen.

The practical arrangements of the agreement between the life minister and the Conference are worthy of note. The life minister agrees to accept an agreement until age of retirement to serve as he may be assigned by the state Conference; to undertake a well-rounded ministry for all persons in the community or communities to which he may be assigned from time to time; to emphasize the community outreach of the church; to consult with the Conference superintendent; to report to the Conference as may be mutually agreed.

The Conference agrees to underwrite a minimum salary; to assure the life minister a habitable parsonage; to contribute to a fund to provide for the education of the minister's children; to provide for car expense in connection with parish work, including operation and replacement of the car; to contribute toward the minister's retirement by assuring payment of the employer's share of the annual premium of the Annuity Fund; and to provide for the health of the minister and family through Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

It should be noted that the financial guarantee by the Conference does not necessarily mean that the Conference must raise the entire amount. The rural church or churches served contribute as under any type of ministry. The Conference merely underwrites the plan and pays any unpaid balance. The parish provides the parsonage and its upkeep. The parish contributions may cover the salary, especially after the first year or two. Should the parish really become a self-supporting

parish of promise it would be expected to assume the other expenses also.

Techniques

The Life Ministry agreement has resulted in certain techniques which are favorable to success. There is a close relationship between the Conference superintendent and the life minister. The agreement is well understood and written.

The coming of the life minister may require a number of relatively inactive churches to join in a yoked relationship. The written agreements between the churches establish the conditions of the yoked field, the manner by which each joins the united effort and the conditions under which each may withdraw. The integrity of each church is thus preserved and democracy controls the relationship between them.

Of prime importance is the fact that the life minister knows he is not merely on his own in handling a difficult task and the parish knows it, too. The length of tenure being determined by the Board of Trustees of the state Conference by agreement with the church, the life minister is not at the mercy of any dissident element which may exist within the small church. This fact is especially valuable where important changes in the structure of the church need to be made as rapidly as possible.

The church knows that failure on its part to respond to leadership will mean the withdrawal of the life minister by the Conference. It is inclined to act in order to hold its leader.

The encouraging factor in this experiment of Life Ministry is that rural churches and areas have responded on the whole with fine goodwill and cooperation to a vigorous and progressive leadership. The Life Ministry is designed for the submarginal and marginal rural church but it is capable of producing churches of promise.

New Hampshire Congregational-Christian Churches

• The New Hampshire Congregational-Christian Conference is a living, working fellowship of 187 New Hampshire churches with a membership of 29,000 people.

Some of the closed churches among the beautiful hills and valleys of the state are coming to life. The people are again beginning to put the church at the center of community life. Closed churches are being reopened to serve communities in which no religious leadership has been offered for more than a generation. This is happening because the New Hampshire Congregational-Christian Conference has a plan and is working with the people where they live.

One of the pressing concerns of the Conference is for a large number of ministers who are receiving extremely inadequate salaries. They are serving churches that could not exist if it were not for the Missionary Aid Grants made by the Conference. More than $6,000 is being used annually for the support of preaching in marginal churches.

The New Hampshire Conference has undertaken pioneer work with two new kinds of ministry: The Life Minister to town and country churches and the Regional Ministry.

Due to decreasing populations and changes in economic and social conditions, many churches in small town and rural areas have found it impossible to call and maintain a full-time minister. In some instances this situation has meant the closing of the church. With great care and patient planning a number of churches have been guided into a "Yoked Field" arrangement, whereby they are now working out together their common problems, and sharing in their common responsibilities. Already 71 churches have been brought together in 35 cooperative arrangements. Each church can enjoy the benefits cooperatively.

A study is now being made of every community in New Hampshire by denominational leaders, under the direction of the New Hampshire Council of Churches, for the purpose of finding out which communities are overchurched and which are underchurched. Cooperative planning is going on to the end that every community may have an adequate religious life and leadership.

Mississippi Research Center

• The Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State College is a cooperative group consisting of personnel representing the several departments and divisions of the college interested in the development of research in the social sciences.

The Center promotes a program of special lectures, seminars, and other group activities in the social sciences, disseminates information of a social science nature, and cooperates with other colleges and agencies both within and outside of the state. It also promotes specific research projects and fosters the graduate program of research in the social sciences.

Publications of the Center include the bimonthly *Social Science Bulletin* and a series of research bulletins known as *Social Science Studies.*

Your Harvest Festival

• Have you overlooked ordering *An Order of Service for a Harvest Festival?* If you have, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $2.60 for each 100 copies.

Harvest Home Festival,
First Baptist Church,
Glasgow, Montana

"The Churches and Agricultural Policy"

• The Department of the Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches has recently published a report of its preliminary study of "The Churches and Agricultural Policy." The purpose of this publication is to provide discussion material for church groups.

The Department of the Church and Economic Life feels that American churches have a three-fold responsibility in respect to agricultural policy:

"a. to study the problems of agriculture and their bearing upon national and world economy;

"b. to apply the basic doctrines of the Christian faith to the problems of agricultural relations;

"c. to act, locally, denominationally and interdenominationally as neighbors, citizens, and members of farm and civic organizations in behalf of an ever more nearly Christian agricultural policy and program for America and for mankind."

Copies of this pamphlet are available from The Department of the Church and Economic Life, The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., for 5 cents per copy, or $4.25 per hundred copies.

Emory Summer School

• Dr. Walt Holcomb, famous Southern evangelist and son-in-law of the famous Sam Jones, established the Walt Holcomb Lectureship on Rural Evangelism at Emory University, given in connection with its annual Town and Country Church Summer School. The Rev. James W. Sells, Extension Secretary of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Council of the Methodist Church was the first lecturer. His subject was "Both Seedtime and Harvest"—a new approach to rural evangelism.

Photograph by Forsythe, U.S.D.A.

Rural Wisconsin Reads

KATHARINE J. MIDDLETON

• Because Wisconsin is predominantly rural, most of the requests that come to the Traveling Library Department of the Free Library Commission are from people living in areas where there are no libraries or where libraries are too small to supply their book needs adequately.

These people are eager for books that will show them better ways of doing a job, books that keep them informed about current affairs, teach them new skills, help them to make their homes happier places in which to live, or just provide them with a few hours of relaxation. Many of the writers ask for the inevitable "westerns" or "whodunits," but a great many more want books that will add more to their lives than a mere escape from boredom.

Inspirational Books

In a troubled world religious books bring comfort to worried and tired people. There are many requests for books by the famous preachers of the day, including those heard on radio programs. There are calls for the Bible itself, especially in the newer versions, and for books about the Bible. Books about prayer, the stories of the great hymns, and accounts of the missionaries of all denominations are also requested. Books that combine psychology and religion are of increasing interest.

Ministers in the rural areas write for books to help them plan church programs, to give them fresh ideas for sermons, and to aid them in counseling their parishioners more effectively.

Up in the northern part of Wisconsin the widow of the pastor of four small churches has been carrying on his work for over a year. She writes for sermon "helps," human interest stories, homespun poetry, or any material that will help make her sermons effective and interesting. She also needs ideas for use in the Sunday schools and for helping the Ladies' Aid to plan their meetings. Sometimes she ends her letter with a plea that sends the librarian flying to the shelves to find some of her own favorite books to send her, "I haven't had a chance to read a good story for a year. Can I have a new

biography or some novel or travel book—something vital?"

A retired manufacturer now living in a small village writes that he expects to take over a Sunday school class for men and would like to borrow up-to-date books on present-day religious ideas. He encloses a long list of titles from which we are to select several books at a time.

A mother asks for a collection of short prayers for her small children to use at table. The leader of a group of young people would like plays that emphasize a high moral standard of living.

For Groups

Many church women are being introduced to good reading through the lists of books suggested by their denominational headquarters. A group of such books is loaned to the women's societies for a long enough period so that most of the women will have an opportunity to read them. A pastor wants to know if he may have a collection of books of a general type for the use of his people who have no library and need good reading. Books are sent to him, also, for longer than the usual loan period.

In the years since the war ended there has been an increasing number of DP's coming into the state, many of whom work on the farms, and few of whom read or speak any language but their own. Their sponsors write to the Traveling Library for books in the language of their DP's to tide them over the difficult period of adjustment to life in a strange country. A book in the familiar tongue is a godsend to the DP who is often barred from contact with those around him until he can learn a little English. The sponsor, too, needs help in making contact with the DP, and asks for a dictionary as a first aid in a frequently trying situation.

Practical Information

Rural people have found that books can help them with many practical problems. The farmer who plans to wire his buildings needs wiring diagrams, while another who wants to build a small storage warehouse asks for directions for mixing concrete. Plans for erecting a roadside stand for the sale of fruit and vegetables and designs for building a small snow plough are requested by the farmer with an eye to seasonal activities. The farmer who must be his own veterinarian writes for books on diagnosing and treating diseases of the farm animals.

The business life of a small village demands books, too. The janitor of a country school wants to know how to run a boiler. A man who has developed a maple sugar product writes for books on the basic principles of advertising, including one that will help him decide which would be the best medium to use in marketing his product. A store owner who plans to rearrange his store to make it more attractive and who also needs ideas on show window displays turns to books for helpful suggestions. A would-be real estate dealer wants to read up on the business, and on how to get started. A dry goods merchant is interested in finding out all he can about the process of screen printing of textiles.

Reading for practical information is not confined to the menfolks. The women, too, find in books the information they need. They want to know how to upholster a chair or make new draperies for the living-room, plan a family budget, work out a diet for a diabetic child. The recipient of a Bavarian spinning-wheel has no idea how to use it, so writes for a book that will give her specific directions. Cookbooks of all kinds and all countries are in constant demand.

Hobbies

Many of the daily letters are from hobby riders who pursue their hobbies with enthusiasm with the help of books. They build model ships, railroads, miniature furniture; they make bows and arrows and tie flies; they model in clay and soap, whittle and carve in wood and stone; they decorate trays or furniture with the popular rosemaling or Pennsylvania Dutch designs. Outdoor hobbyists read up on mushrooms, butterflies, ice fishing, deer hunting, all according to season.

Armchair travelers cover the world by book, crossing deserts, exploring jungles, visiting famous cities, while the lucky few who actually have the time to travel like to read about the places they have been to.

People living in the rural areas do not have many opportunities to see current plays, but through the play lending service of the Traveling Library they may become familiar with most of the better plays in print.

Rural clubs or friendly neighborhood groups find the reading of plays together a delightful way to "put on" a play without the bother of costumes, scenery, learning of parts —or stage fright. Church organizations, especially, are more and more planning programs around the occasional reading of a worthwhile play.

Almost every day a new subject crops up in the mail of the Traveling Library, and once again we realize how varied are the interests of Wisconsin reading. Whether they live in city or country, they read to gratify their curiosity, to keep up with world affairs, or to learn the thousand and one things that may be found in books to make life fuller and richer.

Song of Myself

WALT WHITMAN

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained,
I stand and look at them sometimes an hour at a stretch.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
No one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole earth.

—From *Leaves of Grass*

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God and the Countryside*

• For the Church, the countryside is a land of great promise. The good effects of the better recognition of agriculture in our national economy are already apparent.

The great majority of Essex village boys say that they are going to work on the land; and they say it in a tone, and with a manner, which show that they could think of no preferable alternative. I have always thought it futile, because unreal, just to talk about the dignity of any kind of labor. When its value is given practical financial, material, sacramental recognition, then its dignity is recognized and realized, and men enter upon it.

Dependence on God

It would never have been true, even in the worst days of the agricultural depression to regard the countryman as suffering from an inferiority complex. He has always been far too deeply aware of the compensations of his mode of life ever to be really disturbed by urban lack of understanding. In his work, his life work, God and he are such mates that you can hardly tell where the work of the one begins, and the work of the other leaves off!

An interest in agriculture is essential to the individual country parson for a far better reason than that it gives him a topic of conversation. An interest in agriculture is essential for him because it is the only thing that will convince the countryman that the parson is a man of intelligence—intelligent enough for it to be worth his while to go to church to hear what he has to say.

But of course the greatest asset of the church in the countryside is the extent to which the village is still a community. The church is hard put to it to create community out of nothing. It is hard for the church in any place to create community unless the secular set-up around it gives it the raw materials for doing so. But in a village, if the country parson plays his part in all the more secular activities of the community, he can easily make the church the co-ordinating and consummating factor in the life of the village community.

Science and Religion

Finally, we may look to scientific agriculture for the resolution of the conflict between Religion and Science. That conflict is fundamentally a conflict between the religious mood or frame of mind and the scientific mood or frame of mind. It is the curse of Science when it is allowed to foster man's own conceit instead of his admiration of the wisdom of God.

The country parson does not need to be a genius; but, if the truth is told, the qualities which he does need are not by any means universal among the clergy—to be a good mixer at close quarters, and to have in the countryside a far more profound interest than that of a tripper.

I think that if I were interviewing men for country benefices, I should ask them two questions at least. They would be first, "Do you like rain?" And secondly, "Do you like the winter?" Under these headings the ultimate answer would be: "If you don't like rain, just because it makes you wet, you are showing the characteristic man-centredness of the townsman; and if you don't like the winter, and cannot manage to like it, you are no true lover of nature, because of the vital processes of nature the winter is just as integral a part as any of the other seasons."

Yes, for the Church, the countryside is a land of great promise. I do not pretend to say exactly how we shall enter into full possession of the good land. If this sermon has any merits you may perhaps regard it as a very little cluster of the grapes of Eshcol.

* From a sermon preached by the Bishop of Colchester (The Rt. Rev. F. D. V. Narborough) at the Annual Service of the Industrial Christian Fellowship.

How You Can Help!

The subscription manager of *Town and Country Church* would appreciate receiving advance notice of your change of address.

Problems Confronted by Christians in Agriculture*

JOSEPH W. FICHTER

• It is a satisfaction to feel that the work which one performs is necessary to the well-being of other people. On this score the farmer has a clear conscience, for the production of food is the most essential of all tasks. Man's basic need is food.

The indications are that agriculture will receive increasing emphasis in the years ahead. Not only has the total number of people in the world tremendously increased, but a greater percentage of the population lives in cities than ever before. Consequently, farmers face the prospect of having to grow food for more and more people.

Stewardship

As more and more people depend upon the farmers who take care of the land, the farmer faces an almost terrifying responsibility in the stewardship of the soil that may be under his care and protection. Hunger and poverty are the lot of people in many countries in Asia and Europe because the life-giving qualities of the soil are gone.

Farmers in this country have relied upon the scientists for information and have made use of the knowledge which has been available. In the future, however, the farmer who feels a concern about his stewardship of the land will not only try to keep abreast of new scientific information but will also assume a personal responsibility for exercising wise judgment in the application of this information.

If his goal is to relinquish the land to the next generation in better condition than he received it, he must decide to what extent he will over-stimulate the soil for current production at the expense of depleting its fertility for the future.

Conservation

In past years, much of the soil has been washed away and much of what is left has been injured by overcropping. Both farmers and nonfarmers are to blame for this. The thought has not occurred to us until recently that there are limitations to soil fertility.

People who live in the cities receive their food from the farms. Thus, the farmer asks whether it is his responsibility alone to bear the cost of restoring the fertility of the soil or whether this cost is likewise a responsibility of people in the cities.

A question which arises is, how can the tenant who may have no long-time interest in a tract of land which he farms share a concern about conservation along with the owner?

Farm Laborers

On some farms there are laborers who work for wages. As the farm operator does not set the price of the commodities which he sells, he feels impelled to keep his production costs, including farm wages, as low as possible. In the past, many farm laborers looked forward to becoming tenants and then owners, and so the low wages of farm laborers were excused on the grounds that their position was that of an apprentice.

As the transfer from one position to another in agriculture is more difficult today than formerly, the farm laborer seeks to improve his income as a worker in agriculture or he transfers from agriculture to some other occupation in which wages are higher.

There is a developing shortage of year-round farm workers caused by laborers leaving the farms for industry and by farm boys being taken for military service. Consequently, there is now a very large group of migratory workers who "follow the crops."

Is it not the duty of the Christian farm operator to seek an income for agriculture which will enable him to pay decent wages to farm labor? The per capita income of farm people in the United States has averaged only about one-half as much as that of people in other occupations for many years.

The high cost of food to consumers is not caused by prices set by the farmer. The high food costs at the present time are caused by greater purchasing power in the hands of some consumers and by "mark-ups" added by processors and distributors.

In connection with his search for economic well-being the farmer faces the issue which requires him to decide whether he considers agriculture to be merely a food factory or whether he regards it as a way of life. Is the person in agriculture to be a farmer only, or (to paraphrase Ralph Waldo Emerson) is he to be the Man on the Land?

The Family Farm

The family farm has long been recognized as an environment of freedom for the cultivation of the Christian way of life. In the daily work thereon the members of the family work together, and home ties are strengthened. One is not subject to a time-clock or to the orders imposed by a supervisor. Instead, he adjusts his work to Nature—the sunshine, the rainfall, and the seasons. He is free to set his own goals of financial success, squaring them with his evaluation of life itself and his reason for living. His is the priceless freedom of taking a position on public issues without fear of losing his job.

Perhaps the most important decision confronting us in agriculture is that of deciding whether our attitude towards our daily work shall be motivated by the values inherent in life on a family farm or whether we shall succumb to the influences of an industrial age.

Increasing mechanization if allowed to take its course unguided may eliminate family farming, which has long been a natural environment for Christian living. On the other hand, this mechanization, if

* From an address at the North American Lay Conference on the Christian and his Daily Work, Buffalo, N. Y.

properly directed can remove drudgery and free the body and spirit for fuller living. Thus we in agriculture face a choice between the survival of the fittest philosophy and the Christian way of life.

Ecumenical Seminar on Rural Life

• Word has been received that there will be a Seminar on The Church and Rural Life at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, Chateau Bossey, Celigny, near Geneva, Switzerland, August 24-28, 1953. It is understood that the religious bodies that are members of the World Council are invited and urged to send interested persons. There are now accommodations for about eighty persons at Bossey. Dr. H. Kraemer is director of the Ecumenical Institute.

The program will, we believe, provide for fellowship, exchange of experience, and some formal papers interpreting rural church problems and programs in the various nations that will be represented.

The Department of the Town and Country Church, Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. is prepared to mail to interested Americans a paper with suggestions concerning travel to the Seminar. A number of Americans interested are planning to travel together on board ship, and by chartered bus from a European port to the Ecumenical Seminar.

Will any interested person, who has not previously sent his name to the Department, please write us at once, or no later than October 15, 1952?

Summer School Attendance

• The Cornell Town and Country Summer Schools for Rural Church Workers, Ithaca, N. Y., had the largest attendance in several years. There were thirty-four people who attended one or both of the weeks the schools were open.

Mark Rich

Mark Rich to Missouri

• Dr. Mark Rich, nationally known leader in rural church work, has moved to Columbia, Missouri, to serve as Professor of the Rural Church in the Bible College of Missouri.

For the last eleven years Dr. Rich has been National Secretary of Town and Country Church Work for the American Baptist Home Mission Society, with headquarters at New York City. He is known throughout the country as an author and lecturer. He also serves as Director of Rural Church Center at Green Lake, Wisconsin. In earlier experience as a rural minister, he gained a deep understanding of rural church work.

A native of Oregon, Dr. Rich was graduated from Linfield College and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, then took his M.A. and Ph.D. in Cornell University.

He is author of several books, including "The Larger Parish," "An Effective Organization for Rural Churches," "The Rural Prospect," "Some Churches in Coal Mining Communities of West Virginia," and "Rural Life Prayers."

Since beginning his work with the American Home Mission Society, Dr. Rich has served as lecturer at Union Theological Seminary, Garrett Biblical Institute, and in leadership schools at the Wisconsin and New Jersey colleges of agriculture.

According to Dean Seth W. Slaughter of the Bible College of Missouri, no rural leader in America stands higher among all the denominations than Dr. Rich.

Interdenominational Seminary for Rural Ministers

• The Bible College of Missouri has announced a course of study and field work especially oriented to the work of the minister in town and country. The fields of study will include: The Biblical, Theological, Historical, Christian Leadership, and Church and Community. Emphasis is placed upon the field work as part of the curriculum which means that there is a balance of theory and practice in the educational process.

The Bible College works closely with denominational executives and church boards in the program of supervising its students.

Further information may be procured by writing to Dean Seth W. Slaughter, Bible College of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

Seneca Rural Church Council

• The churches in the southeast section of Ontario County, N. Y., have formed the Seneca Rural Church Council during the past year. The aim is to strengthen the work of all the churches through mutual projects of several types. The Lenten services, which were well attended, gave the new Council a start toward a well-stocked treasury.

The Council is in an area where the pastors have functioned well in a ministerial association for a number of years. With the counsel of Stanley Skinner, of the staff of The Rural Church Institute, Ithaca, N. Y., laymen have been brought into the picture and a Council formed to parallel the ministerial association. The Council is related to the Ontario County Council.

Wisconsin Rural Art Program

JAMES A. SCHWALBACH

• Wisconsin plans to put as many paintings in the state as there are dairy cattle. Sponsored by the College of Agriculture, the Wisconsin Rural Art Program has exhibited 1,800 pictures this year. These were painted by the citizens who handle the Guernseys and the Holsteins, the Shropshires and the Lansdownes, the Poland China and Duroc hogs, the Plymouth Rocks and the Leghorns, and the growers of oats and barley and potatoes.

The peak of this rural art program was reached in the spring of 1952 when 133 pictures culled from the 1,800 were exhibited at the University of Wisconsin and when 180 rural artists and rural art fans sat down together at a luncheon. Afterwards they followed Aaron Bohrod, artist in residence at the College of Agriculture, as he went from picture to picture in a gallery tour.

Contributors

Most of the rural artists are in their middle years, with a few going toward the setting sun. But there is not one of them who is not aglow with the joy that comes from capturing some particular beauty of the world. Back of certain pictures lies a determination to put down some scene beloved by parent or grandparent.

"This is what I see from my kitchen window," says one rural artist. Another says, "I painted this to see if it was possible to get on paper as much color as nature puts on the trees in autumn." Others explain, "My mother loved this scene," or "This is my memory of the farm where I lived for fifty years."

The Paintings

Laurie Brooks, a Nekoosa artist, painted "The New Lamp" from memories of her grandfather's home. The hanging lamp runs up and down on chains. Around its china globe are crystal prisms that tinkle as Grandpa pulls the lamp down over the center table.

Another picture with a nostalgic feeling is "Christmas Program," by Frances Burt of Albany. Two youngsters of long ago are evidently giving declamations or indulging in a duet.

Mrs. Margaret Van Slate arrived late for the luncheon. The train was on time, but she was held up by a parade. Her painting, "A Wisconsin Homesteader Brings Home His Bride," is from a story her mother often told of how her father met his bride in Merrill, then the northern terminus of the railroad, and in a box sledge drawn by two oxen conducted her to the log house he had built in the woods.

Walter Marsden, eighty-three years of age, painted "A Memory," showing children prancing along in imitation of their mother when she goes to church and carries her parasol. The children's parasols are mandrakes.

You might say that Marsden is a Grandpa Moses. When he was twenty, he wanted to become an artist. His father gave him $200 and he enrolled in a Milwaukee art school. Marsden studied three winters, going back to the farm to work each summer. The necessity of earning a living obliged him to give up art. He married, reared a family and farmed without thinking of art for more than fifty years.

Walter Thorp of Baraboo calls his entry, also included in the permanent collection, "The Picture of Life." Along with a lot of objects he considers of importance in his life—an alarm clock, an ink bottle, brushes, tubes of paint, a section of old wallpaper and a torn page from a newspaper—he has painted the picture of an old print which used to be in Grandmother Thorp's home.

Instruction

The rural art program begins to function, so far as the University is concerned, about February 1, provided the snows are not too deep. The state has been divided into twelve sections so that no one who wants to paint is too far from a regional art center. Every Friday night when rural art is cooking, a car sets out from the Wisconsin campus. It holds a professor from the art education faculty, also this author, whose business it is to make rural art flourish, and two graduate students or seniors in the art department. The next morning the four university art experts meet the local rural artists in a church, a schoolhouse or a town hall. Already the pictures the local artists have made are on the walls.

The professor of art immediately goes into action, giving a demonstration while the rural painters crowd around. He may make a water-color of the landscape he sees out of the window or he may create a block print before his audience. He may make a pastel portrait or even an oil.

In the afternoon there is a talk on a general art subject and then, working together and using every means of holding an audience, the art professor and the graduate men give a comprehensive gallery tour.

"You have to be on your toes," says Fred Logan of the art department. "These people are really interested . . . they want to find out what art is and how to arrive at it."

Then there is the Blue Shield Committee on rural art, a college student group which takes care of the mechanics of the Madison Rural Art Show. These students plan and set up the final state show which culminates the year's activity.

Released-Time Programs Expanding

• Since the Supreme Court decision approved the system of released-time religious instruction practiced in New York State, released-time programs across the country seem to be growing and improving.

Dr. Erwin L. Shaver, executive director of weekday religious education for the National Council of Churches, told some 275 church executives at the annual conference of the Association of Council Secretaries that the "clear and final" court decision had brought about a "new day" by ending legal uncertainty. •

Lynville's Men's Club

HAROLD F. KAUFMAN

• Lynville, an open-country community in the hills of central Mississippi, is typical of many communities in the South. It is in an area of small farms with cotton and livestock as the major enterprises. Approximately two hundred white families and less than one-half as many colored families live in the school district which is considered the community area.

Lynville does not have all the answers but like hundreds of other awakened communities, small and large, it is searching for them, and thus its activities are of interest to others. Some leaders believed that a Rural Life Conference would help provide an opportunity for the whole community to take stock, definite problems and to decide on next steps.

The Conference

The Methodist Men's Club, organized two years ago, called the conference. All four denominations in the community have membership in the club. The enrollment is thirty-five, with an average attendance of eighteen. The group meets twice a month, and acts as well as talks.

During the past year the group has sponsored a community Christmas tree, a political picnic at which the several candidates and issues were presented, and several benevolent projects. More than $700 was raised for a family whose home had burned, firewood was provided for elderly people, money raised for a hospital bill, and tithing and Lord's Acre programs initiated to increase church support.

The afternoon session of the conference was devoted to stock-taking —noting conditions, problems and progress. The ministers, the county agricultural agent, a country health department representative, and teachers of the consolidated school took the lead in the discussion. Community problems listed dealt with training and employment opportunities for youth, religious development, better land use, improved health conditions and better roads. Many young people were going elsewhere to find employment. The vocational agricultural instructor reported that of the approximately one hundred and sixty boys graduated in the last twenty years only eighteen or nineteen were now farming in the community.

After two hours of analyzing problems the conference adjourned for outdoor games, visiting and a basket supper. The evening meeting opened with group singing, followed by a discussion led by community specialists from the State College. A sermon closed the conference.

Does Lynville now have the organization necessary for continuous community development? What are its first projects and how are they to be organized? The community is seeking the answers. The Rural Life Conference was a first step in the search.

Report of Federated Churches

• *Rural Fellowship,* bulletin of the Rural Church Institute, Ithaca, N. Y., is publishing the findings of Ralph Williamson's nation-wide study of federated churches. In various phases about one hundred federated churches are represented in the study. There were found to be 603 such churches in existence in December, 1950.

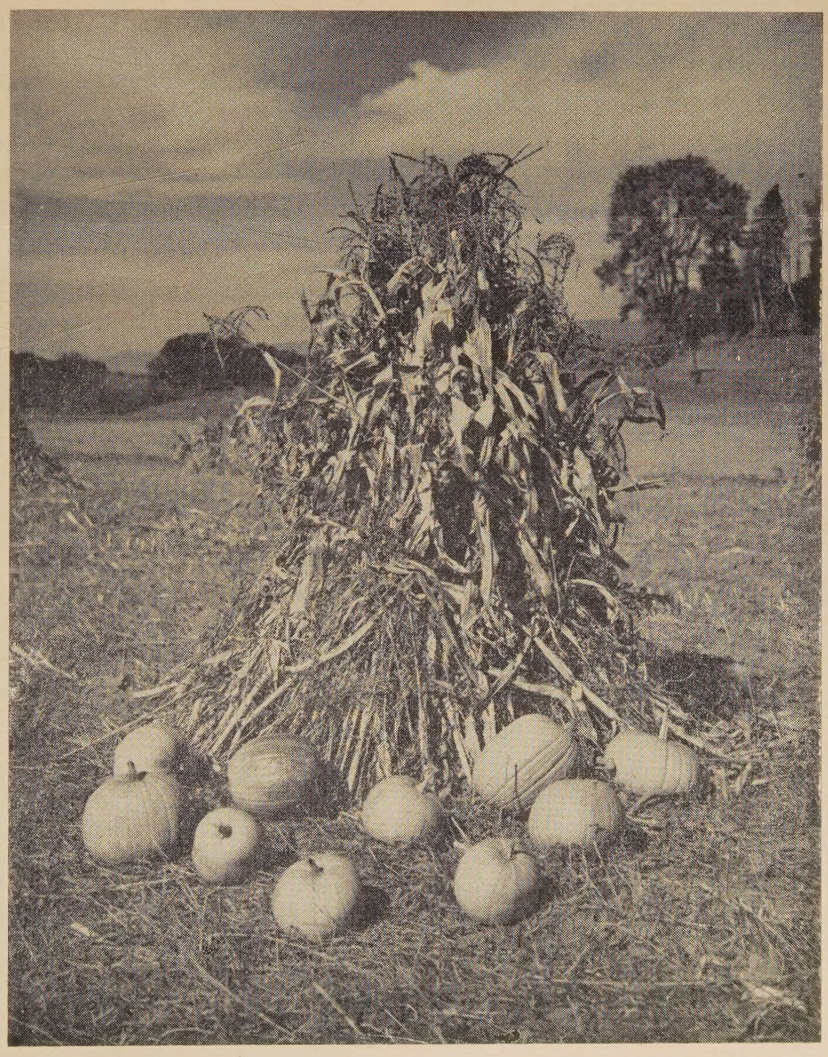

Photo by Philip Gendreau, N. Y.

Churching Rural Kansas*

• At a recent meeting of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Department of the Town and Country Church requested that each Synod set up a committee to study a strategy for making the rural churches of the denomination more effective. The Synod of Kansas' Commission on National Missions had anticipated that request and set up a committee, drawn from the Presbyterian Rural Fellowship, to suggest a rural strategy. The following report was adopted for presentation to the Committee on National Missions.

Rural Churches

81.4 per cent of the Kansas Presbyterian churches may be considered rural in character. The agricultural element of our population deserves a more important place in the thinking of our church judicatories than it has been accustomed to receive.

It must be pointed out, however, that some rural areas are not agricultural in character. In the areas surrounding the metropolitan centers vast residential sections are developing. This process is called urbanization. City people, while maintaining their employment in the city, are moving to the rural areas to benefit from the advantages of rural life.

Further, many rural Kansas towns are developing industrial life. This changes the character of the community. Laborers have different problems than farmers.

Functions of Rural Strategy

Not only does a rural strategy demand a program for strengthening the smaller churches—most of which are rural—but it further requires that more attention be given to rural problems in our town and city churches as well. As a consequence the strategy falls into the following divisions:

A. Awakening a consciousness of our rural character and extending the work of the town churches to include farm areas as well.

B. Implementing the work of the rural churches with organization of, and appreciation for, parish programs which will help them to more adequately serve the rural communities of which they are a part.

C. Supplying the vacant churches, which are most generally rural, with the type of ministry which will meet rural needs.

D. Developing rural ministers who from the moment they determine to answer God's call to the ministry are determined to minister to the needs of rural people throughout their ministerial lives.

Recommendations for Meeting Demands

The Committee recommends the organization of an active Presbyterian Rural Fellowship which will include the ministers and laymen of all churches which are located in communities with populations under 10,000.

The fellowship should continue its work with the interdenominational rural organizations already existing within the Synod. In fact, it should so enthusiastically endorse these interdenominational activities that every rural organization in the state of Kansas would know that the Presbyterian Church is willing to cooperate in efforts to enrich rural life and is capable of contributing the ministry of its spiritual resources to that process of enrichment.

Our denomination ought to cooperate wholeheartedly with the Kansas Council of Churches in its program for the "National Teaching Mission" which seeks, by way of county-wide religious surveys, to uncover the unchurched areas of our state.

When community leaders forsake the small rural church for activity in a larger town church they should be guided toward efforts to provide a ministry for their neighbors who may be left churchless. Often leadership from a town church can operate a Sunday school in the rural neighborhood which would be more efficient than "to town" transportation.

It would be ideal if we could have a General Presbytery in each of the Presbyteries who know the problem of the rural church and supervise the work of these vacant churches.

Intradenominational cooperation seems to be the answer to some rural situations in which the Presbyterian congregation is the dominant body or at least a legitimate part of the community. Simple yoking of fields is evolving into a more closely knit type of cooperation called the Larger Parish. Another type of cooperation is known as the Cooperative Parish. The two are distinguished by the degree of sociological unity which prevails in the situation.

Conclusions

A better understanding of the rural situation is needed by all members of the Synod. Better training for rural ministers is needed which will awaken in them a sense of mission and life-long devotion to the rural ministry and a philosophy for rural living and the techniques for realizing this philosophy in the social situation.

It is imperative that there be more cooperation between the stronger town churches and the weaker churches nearby.

There should be cooperation with the secular organizations of the community for the mutual enrichment of the church and the community.

Interdenominational cooperation should be encouraged to eliminate the wastefulness of competition and to gain the advantage of an adequate ministry in each community.

There should be more intradenominational cooperation in the form of Larger Parishes and Cooperative Parishes for the provision of a strong and diversified ministry to the rural people.

Migrant Prayer

Help us as a unit, O God, to grow stronger in faith. Help us to follow your wise path. *Amen.*

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* From a report of the Synod of Kansas, Presbyterian U.S.A. Committee on Rural Church Strategy.

Pope Congratulates Priest-Cooperator

• Pope Pius XII sent a congratulatory message to the Rev. J. J. Tompkins, Nova Scotian priest, when the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood was observed at Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

The Pope spoke of Father Tompkins as "a well-deserving apostle of social movement and a zealous pastor." Father Tompkins pioneered in the program of "adult education through economic cooperation" which the well-known Msgr. M. M. Coady has directed.

Father Tompkins has passed his 82nd birthday, and has been ill in St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish, for some time. The weekly journal of the diocese says that Father Tompkins has since 1948 "fought an uphill battle to keep the spark of life in the frail frame that was so badly spent in the formative years when he was laying the groundwork for the social program that is today known as the Antigonish Movement."

Father Tompkins was once vice-president of St. Francis Xavier University Antigonish. As parish priest at Canso he organized small study groups in which fishermen studied books and pamphlets and became interested in cooperatives as practical techniques of economic and social improvement.

Father Tompkins advocated self-help to desperate fishermen who during the depression years often lacked shoes. He spent many hours of study with the fishermen of his parish. He once observed that he came to know why the first disciples that Christ called to himself were fishermen.

A telegram sent from Canso in 1927 to the Canadian government at Ottawa, resulted in appointment of a Royal Commission which studied the plight of the fishermen. The Royal Commission in due course recommended self-help to the fishermen just as the priest had done. The chief result of the Commission was the work of Msgr. Coady. He recommended voluntary organization, with success which is now studied by many religious and cooperative leaders throughout the world.

Father Tompkins moved to Reserve Mines, and started cooperative housing and libraries of the people. The people naturally responded by naming a cooperative housing project "Tompkinsville" and establishing a Tompkins Memorial library.

To the adult educators of the U. S. Father Tompkins was an inspiring counselor. He helped organize the American Association for Adult Education in 1924. Once at a conference an educator asked him how he could tell when he had a "good program." "You can smell it" was the reply.

—*Cooperative News Service*

Food for Famine Victims in India

• In India, the monsoon rains failed for the fifth consecutive year, the rice crop in the Chittoor District is only a third of normal production, and many people are reduced to eating grasses, cactus fibre and tree bark to keep from starvation.

More than a million pounds of food, donated by Christian Americans, was sent to famine victims in June of this year. At a dock-side ceremony in Baltimore, Dr. Earl Frederick Adams, an administrative secretary of the National Council, in behalf of the National Council's Central Department of Church World Service, turned over the first shipload of relief supplies to Indian Ambassador Binay Ranjan Sen.

At Baltimore, the S. S. City of Chester was loaded with wheat and powdered milk, and would later pick up another load of cereals before sailing for India. Other ships loaded with rice, powdered milk and concentrated foods were sailing from New Orleans and Oakland, Calif. The total of 1,209,444 pounds, made possible by funds from the appeal of the Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP) of Church World Service, was estimated as more than 2,000,000 days of workman's standard rations and more than 3,000,000 glasses of milk for hungry children.

Autumn Leaves

The leaves, though thick, are falling: one by one
Decayed they drop from off their parent tree;
Their work with Autumn's latest day is done,—
Thou see'st them borne upon the breezes free.
They lie strewn here and there, their many dyes
That yesterday so caught thy passing eye;
Soiled by the rain each leaf neglected lies,
Upon the path where now thou hurriest by.
Yet think thee not their beauteous tints less fair
Than when they hung so gayly o'er thy head;
But rather find thee eyes, and look thee there
Where now thy feet so heedless o'er them tread,
And thou shalt see, where wasting now they lie,
The unseen hues of immortality.

—Jones Very

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Rural Quakerism

• We have just concluded a week of meetings in one of the very strong rural centers of the Five Years Meeting. There are several similar Quaker rural Meetings—indeed the Five Years Meeting of Friends is predominantly rural. As one reviews the Quaker men and women who compose our local and Yearly Meetings and the Five Years Meeting, he cannot escape the profound impression that our area of the Society of Friends thinks and contributes in many ways from a farm background.

There is always something primeval, something of the organism and its roots in a farming community. That idea is not a play on words, nor a reaching for figures of speech —it is literally true. Where men touch the soil there is more than corn and wheat planted and germinated. In ordinary industrial life our problems are adjusted between levels of authority and responsibility. When an economic problem gets back to the soil, there is no answer, enforceable, beyond it. At that point mother nature takes over. She is unyielding, yet benevolent in so far as men understand her ways and unlock her resources. "Mother" nature? Here is the parent of our economic well being.

Rural churches are not generally given over to precise organization, as are the city churches, made up of members whose daily lives also are involved in organization. Rural life and experiences suggest seeds, roots, soil, growth, fruit, harvest, cycles of crops, etc. Of course mother nature is scientific, working by laws and through her organized forms, but in ways often unpredictable and offering surprises even to those who know her best.

How much the church needs to get back to roots and growth principles, as outward forms begin to crack and fall. Nothing lasts that has arrived at its final stage. Nothing endures that is not growing—not necessarily in size but in its significance. If it is significant, it will finally push out of its old walls and newer, fresher forms of life will appear.

Our rural churches, in so far as they catch the message taught by their good farms and translate it into building of the Kingdom of God, have a basic contribution to make through the church. We need their "slant," for the slant is root-ward.

—From an editorial in
The American Friend

Cooperation as a World Movement

• The Cooperative Wholesale Society is the largest business in Great Britain, it is stated in one of a series of reports on cooperatives being published in the Review of International Cooperatives.

In Japan, where Toyohika Kagawa, well-known Christian leader, has been influential in the Cooperative movement, there are now 34,000 local agricultural associations grouped in twenty-two national federations. This development has taken place mainly since 1947, when a new law was put into effect as a supplement to the land reform act. The purpose of the Cooperative law was to enable the new landowners to become established as independent family farmers.

In Saskatchewan, Canada, seven out of every ten persons are reported to belong to at least one type of cooperative. Children in public schools are given instruction about them.

Italy has almost 10,000 local Cooperative Housing Associations. In Amsterdam, Holland, a housing cooperative has 3,000 homes under its management.

The International Cooperative Alliance is one of the largest of the voluntary organizations in the world. In its constituency there are now more than 360,000 local associations with more than 97,000,000 members. Cooperatives in thirty-one nations are represented. Consumers' organizations have 58,000,000 out of the 97,000,000 members. Agricultural Cooperatives have about 18,000,000 members. Many other types are included.

—Reprinted from
Cooperative News Service

Kodachrome Slide and Roll Film Sets

• The following Kodachrome Slide and Roll Film Sets are available from The Rural Church Institute, Barnes Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.:

Rural Prospect, illustrating Mark Rich's book (Slide Set. No. 3)

The Lord's Acre Plan—New Hampshire, New York and Pennsylvania Projects (Slide Set No. 5)

The Lord's Acre Plan—New York Projects (Slide Set No. 6)

Rural Church Programs in New York State, available with tape recorded and typed scripts (Slide Set No. 7)

The Cornell Town and Country Summer School—Depicts the unusual training opportunities afforded ministers and laymen (Slide Set. No. 8)

United Churches at Work—Shows larger parishes, federations and inter-church councils (Slide Set No. 9)

The Lord's Acre—Produced by the Methodist Board of Missions, showing mainly the successful experience of Missouri churches (Roll film Set. No. A)

Where We Are, by Dr. Arthur Raper, U. S. Department of Agriculture (Roll film Set. No. B)

The above sets are available for rental any reasonable length of time for a fee of $1.00 plus return postage.

Church Land in Greece

• High government and church leaders in Greece have agreed to have the Church turn over four-fifths of its cultivated land and two-thirds of its pasture lands to the State, for use by destitute farmers. In compensation, the Church is to receive a cash indemnity and some other lands. Exemption from seizure was secured for a number of estates in Attica, said to be the most valuable of the Church properties and estates belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Istanbul.

—*Ecumenical Press Service*

Central Baptist Theological Seminary

C. R. McBRIDE

• Central Baptist Theological Seminary at Kansas City, Kansas, is in the center of one of the world's richest agricultural areas. It is at the center of thousands of rural churches, many of which are in a precarious condition.

In 1949, after a careful survey of this area had been made, President W. W. Adams and the Board of Trustees of Central Baptist Theological Seminary reached a decision that the school must take into consideration the rural people and their churches. It must train ministers for these churches.

In September, 1949, the Department of Rural Leadership Training was opened. The first year a total of six term hours of work was offered. With the opening of the fourth academic year thirty-seven term hours are offered, so that it is now possible to take a rural major on both the B.D. and the Th.M. levels.

Curriculum

The core of the academic work has been developed around three courses: "An Introduction to the Rural Church Movements"; "The Rural Church, its Message, Organization and Program"; and "The Rural Minister, his Home and Office."

Around these three courses, as a secondary, but very important line are three other courses: "Rural Christians and Natural Resources"; "The Christian Home in a Rural Setting"; and "The Rural Church and its Community."

In still another circle are courses in Group Discussion Techniques, Supervised Pastoral Work, and Practicums.

In cooperation with the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, twelve weeks of summer study are offered on the B.D. and Th.M. levels. The study covers courses in Agronomy, Animal Husbandry, Farm Management and Agricultural Economics.

Institutes

In addition to the work at the Seminary the Department believes it is of great value to hold meetings with local churches. During the fall quarter of each school year "One-Day Institutes" are held, on invitation, in churches of Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and Iowa. To date, fifty-one institutes have been conducted.

The plan does not call for a large gathering of people—usually including five or six representative people from as many churches. The institutes begin at ten o'clock with a devotional service, after which the people are introduced to certain pertinent facts that may help them to understand the place of rural people and churches in American life. They are then led to list what they consider to be the more serious problems confronting their churches. Each problem is examined to make sure it is a real problem.

After lunch, during which time there is a literature display to be examined and literature purchased, the group attempts, through group discussion, to solve one or two of the problems listed in the morning hour.

The evening hour is reserved for a rural rally, sometimes with a banquet. Music and an inspirational address feature this hour. Occasionally a rural movie is used.

The one-day institute is now being expanded into a week-end institute, beginning on Friday night and continuing through Sunday. In the latter, film strips and movies can be used to better advantage.

Mid-Winter Short Courses

From the middle of January until the middle of April a short course is offered pastors and laymen within commuting distance of the Seminary. The course, "Establishing Christian People in Town and Country Communities" has been offered for three years with a good attendance.

A number of rural courses are now on extension and may be taken by correspondence. This makes it possible for pastors and laymen who cannot come to the Seminary to receive help in their church work.

Other Programs

Rural Church Emphasis Week is held annually the third week before Easter. At this time an outstanding rural pastor is honored by being invited to deliver the chapel lectures. Denominational leaders and representative pastors are invited to share in the activities and all rural pastors and laymen are invited to attend.

In cooperation with the Iowa Baptist Convention rural students have been sent to closed churches in an effort to revive the churches. To date six Baptist churches have been reopened in Iowa. It is expected that this program will be greatly enlarged in the next few years, for in this way students receive excellent training, and churches in needy areas are opened and strengthened.

June 15 to July 3, 1953 has been set for the first Rural Summer School. Five term hours can be earned in this way.

A farm-laboratory is also in the planning by which it is hoped that a 200-acre farm may be developed for the training of rural ministers and their wives.

"Rural Pastor with a Vision"

• Jack Waldrep, pastor of a circuit of ten Methodist churches in north Georgia, was cited last year by *Progressive Farmer* as Georgia's Rural Minister of the Year. The award is based on a man's four-fold record: as a pastor, in community activities, cooperation with agencies working toward a permanent agriculture, and in the field of unusual achievements.

In a recent issue of *The Christian Advocate,* Marel Brown tells about the influence of this pastor—about the erection of a modern $10,000 church, built and paid for in little more than a year; the vacation Bible schools; better living conditions for the people; Lord's Acre projects and other successful tithing programs.

Seward County, Neb.

• The Experiment Station of the University of Nebraska has published "A Study of Rural Communities and Organizations in Seward County, Nebraska." It was prepared by A. H. Anderson, Social Science Analyst, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Seward County lies in the corn belt of Nebraska. Its communities vary in population from Seward with 2,826 inhabitants, to Goehner, with 125, most of whom fall within a relatively narrow income range.

There are over forty active churches in the county, ten of which are in the open country. All but three of these open-country churches maintain full-time pastors and are centers of neighborhood or community group activities. Religious values play an important part in the county. Rural church in-service institutes are sponsored by the State Agricultural College.

The Grange, Farmers' Union and Farm Bureau are represented in the county, but farmers' cooperatives are the most important type of organization for farmers in terms of membership and county-wide distribution. The principal youth organizations are those sponsored by the churches and schools and the 4-H Club.

The Church Defining the Rural Community

RALPH B. IMES

• Rural pastors are urged to know their communities and to make a map of the area of goods and services obtained by their people.

The true anatomy, if one may use this word, of the rural community, however, is not revealed in a trade and service area study. The rural pastor knows that rural life is more real and pulsating than this. He knows that the real definition of the rural community will be a matter of determining the kind of structure of relationships through which rural people provide their total daily requirements.

The church should seek to define the rural community in these more functional terms. The rural pastor needs a spot map that will show the patterns of relationships people have, the living network of interrelationships.

The church needs to define the rural community in terms of the "patterns of interaction." The rural pastor needs to know how these forms and structures function. For example, he might plot the farm homes and then draw lines from place to place, using different colors, as he determines where the people trade, find their recreation, go in an emergency and any other category he might want to use. These lines of interaction, as they shape themselves into patterns, will offer clues to the true functional nature of the community.

These, in turn, can be used by the rural churchman in the formulation of a rural program that will meet the needs of the people where and how they live. The church, then, defining the rural community, will be less concerned with the classical and hypothetical definitions than with the real, living relationships of functioning rural life.

The Rural Church's Future

• In the horse-and-buggy days one-room rural churches were built within a few miles of each other, in order to serve entire communities. Today, due to population changes and the prevalence of the automobile, community boundaries have been so extended that many of these little churches are no longer needed. "The answer," writes W. J. Oldham in a recent issue of *The Word and Way*, official journal of the Missouri Baptists, "is obviously that the rural church, in order to keep pace with the changing scene, must unite with other churches of similar faith and provide for a more commodious center of worship with a broader program of activity for all the membership."

Influencing the World Community

HAROLD A. KIRCHENBAUER

• Me, I'm a Methodist preacher, and my people are giving me a hard time! They are working me to death —always hollering for information and thinking up new things for me to do. I never should have started that Sunday Evening Fellowship in the first place!

We started it all wrong too. We didn't meet in the church, and we didn't have any publicity announcing the "Grand Opening." Come to think of it, we never even elected a chairman or appointed a secretary, and we didn't have a program or plan any refreshments. We were sort of naïve and thought that we might just invite a couple over to the parsonage on Sunday evening since nothing was going on in the church after MYF, and maybe we could have a nice quiet, sociable Christian evening.

We enjoyed being just plain folks so much that our friends invited us over on the Sunday evening two weeks hence. When we got there, another couple had arrived by invitation, and they enjoyed the evening so much that they invited the four of us to their house for the next meeting.

From then on I just sort of lost track of things. All I know is that from twenty-five to thirty people of all ages are meeting regularly in each others' homes on Sunday nights with no formal program or organization and with or without the preacher.

They have another big failing too. Everybody gets to talking at once, and they get sort of gossipy about local problems. Furthermore, they never make any motions or pass any resolutions. The thing that really burns me up though is the crystalization of thought and resultant social action that materializes out of such disorganized and friendly meetings! For example, one night they decided to have a "Phillips 66" meeting on "What can I do to improve the church?" And me, after arriving way late for the meeting, I go home with

three pages of church program for the coming year all outlined for me!

The last time they met, they informed a member of the School Board who was present that it would be in the best interest of the families concerned to have the high school buses used to transport pupils to athletic contests. At the next meeting of the school board it was so ordered. Now I hear that they are going to have some Army colonel and some rabid pacifist in to round out a panel they are getting up for a discussion on U.M.T. And, of all things, it is to be a public meeting! And, of all places, it is to be in the Methodist church.

Yes sir, I never should have started that Sunday Evening Fellowship. They sure are giving me a hard time!

—From *The Rural Church*

New Committee on Religion and Rural Life

• Formation of the National Committee on Religion and Rural Life has been completed. Leaders in the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and the Rural Life Association joined in formation of the new body.

The constitution of the new body gives the purpose and object as follows: "to stimulate, encourage and allocate funds toward the support of, and to unite in common cause, Catholic, Protestant and other groups, agencies and persons, which are striving to achieve a deeper and more significant appreciation of the spiritual values in rural life by conducting and sponsoring educational programs and projects and activities emphasizing the values, needs and opportunities of rural living and the religious basis for the conservation and development of spiritual, human and natural resources in rural areas."

Funds raised for this purpose will be divided into three equal parts: One-third to be distributed by each of the two parent agencies, and one-third directly by the National Committee. The latter will use its share of the funds to aid special surveys, projects and studies relating to religion and rural life, on a non-denominational basis.

The board of directors of the National Committee on Religion and Rural Life is to be composed of ten members: five nominated by the Rural Life Association and five by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. There is to be a thirty-member advisory committee, with half the members chosen by each of the parent bodies. The chairman of the board will be appointed alternately by Catholics and Protestants.

Southwest Texas Methodism

• The Southwest Texas Council of the Methodist Church has recently published a report of "Southwest Texas Methodism," which was prepared by R. F. Curl. The report deals with such aspects as the land and people, the ministers, minority groups, institutions and program.

Of particular interest to those interested in the Town and Country Church is the way Southwest Texas Methodism is endeavoring to meet the "rural challenge" in that state. In some cases, closing the church has been necessary in order to meet the problem of shifts in population, but the people in sparsely settled communities are served by the "Minimum Salary Fund." By this plan every pastor is assured of a subsistence salary. "The portion of this salary which the congregation, because of small membership, cannot pay is paid by the other churches of the Conference out of the Minimum Salary Fund. Thus, the church in the county seat town or in the great city shares in supplying a ministry to the church at the crossroads where there are just a few people."

The Southwest Texas Methodist Conference realizes that the problem of a ministry for rural communities cannot be solved solely on the basis of group ministries, consolidation of churches, or salaries. It is also endeavoring to dignify and lengthen the period of rural pastorates and to adopt a long-range rural church program.

Book Review

The Farmer Takes A Hand. By Marquis Childs. Doubleday and Company, Garden City, N. Y. 1952. $3.50.

Marquis Childs, who wrote "Sweden: The Middle Way," has told about the growth of rural electrification cooperatives in the U.S.A. in *The Farmer Takes A Hand.* Senator Aiken of Vermont, long conversant with farm cooperative, writes the introduction.

Cooperatives have been an important factor in the process whereby almost ninety per cent of American farms now have electric power. They have organized an association which is already a power in the politics of power on the American scene.

Mr. Childs quotes the Rev. Francis B. Sayre of the Episcopal Cathedral in Washington, addressing a meeting of a southern cooperative, as noting the democratic basis of cooperatives and the importance of an awareness of responsibility for the common good. Mr. Sayre also felt that the significance of the movement was far broader than the material gains of light and power. These cooperatives had helped to free men and women from retarding toil and had enabled people to grasp new opportunities.

—B. Y. L.

Methodists Look at Rural Needs

• The Town and Country Department of the Methodist Church, of which Glenn F. Sanford is director, recently called two meetings of theological professors to consider the problems of the town and country church. The meetings were held at Louisville, Kentucky, and Indianola, Iowa.

The problems which were considered at these meetings included leadership training; program and techniques; improvement of parsonages; and settling Methodist young people in town and country.

Announcement Regarding the 1952 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country

The Place and Time: Columbus, Ohio, October 29-31, 1952.

Program: A printed program is available on application to your Board of Home Missions or to the Department of the Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Registration Fee: A registration fee of $1.00 will be charged to help carry the expense of the Convocation. This is paid when you register at the Deshler-Wallick Hotel, Broad and High Streets, Columbus, Ohio.

Who May Attend: Everyone interested in the town and country church.

"The Rural Church Speaks"

• The program of the Rural Church Institute's series over WGY, Schenectady, N. Y., is now at 7:45 A.M. each Sunday, under the above title. The program for October is as follows:

Oct. 5—"The Athens Federated Church," by George Skaggs and Ivan Cash.

Oct 12—"Report of CROP Progress," by Ralph Williamson.

Oct. 19—"Story of Elder Lemuel Powers," by Ted Conklin.

Oct. 26—"Rural Evangelism," by Kenneth E. Hoover.

The committee has also made assignments for two television programs; namely, at Thanksgiving and Christmas. November will complete six years of rural church television over WGRB, the first having been a dramatization of "The Angelus," by the Caroline Valley Players from Tompkins County, N. Y.

Harry V. Richardson

• Harry V. Richardson, President of Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia, since 1947, will address the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country at Columbus, Ohio, October 29th, on the subject: "The Rural Church of the Negro People in the South." Dr. Richardson is one of the best informed persons in America in this field and is the author of "Dark Glory," which is used as a textbook in many schools.

Dr. Richardson has a distinguished record as a scholar, preacher, and maker of ministers. At the Harvard Divinity School where he received his theological training he finished with both of the two highest honors in the School. One was the Billings Prize for "excellence in pulpit delivery."

In 1932, Dr. Richardson went to Tuskegee Institute to teach and to assist in the religious work of the Institute. At the end of that year, the Trustees of the School unanimously elected him to the Chaplaincy. It was in this position that Dr. Richardson won nation-wide distinction as a preacher. His sermon at the burial of George Washington Carver is regarded as a pulpit classic. Its title was, "For God So Loved The World."

Dr. Richardson has been active in interracial work for many years. Partly as a result of his effort, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, in cooperation with the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches (formerly the Home Missions Council of North America) began in 1946 a program of rural church development in the South through in-service training of Negro sharecropper pastors and through courses in rural church work at seminaries. Dr. Richardson has ably directed this work. Under his supervision, the percentage of Negro rural ministers with professional training has greatly increased. Facilities have been made available and standards of scholarship raised.

Dr. Richardson was one of the speakers at the 1947 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Rochester, N. Y.

Sharecroppers' Prayers

• O God of Heaven and earth, help those of us who toil at early morn, in the heat of the day, and often into the cool of the evening, to remember how thou lovest the things of the field; and how thou seest justice between man and man as true ways of growth—the only sure ways for our full flowering. Help those who claim the lands as their possessions to realize that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; help them and us to see one another as needful one unto the other, for the right use of this, thy earth, and the growth of man toward thee in stature and in grace. *Amen.*

The things that I do that are unpleasant in thy sight—may I learn to refrain from them. O God, to love like thee is my prayer. May discrimination within our churches be done away and the gospel be preached to all persons. *Amen.*

From Administrative to Research Role for Shirley Greene

• Under a special grant from the Congregational-Christian Committee for Relief and Reconstruction, Shirley E. Greene will devote half his time to a research project on the educational problems of agricultural migrant children. Co-sponsoring the study are the American Friends Service Committee, the Department of Rural Education of the National Education Association, the Committee on Migrant Work of the National Council of Churches, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the National Child Labor Committee and the National Council for Agricultural Life and Labor.

Miss Elizabeth Herring (formerly Secretary for Rural Interests of the Y.W.C.A.) will succeed Shirley Greene as executive secretary of the National Council for Agricultural Life and Labor.